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GATHERED POEMS



GATHERED POEMS

OF

ERNEST MYERS

"Ὅσα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ, ὅσα σεμνὰ, ὅσα προσφιλῆ, ταῦτα λογίεσθε.

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever venerable, whatsoever lovely,
think on these things.

6 2 6 26
7/7/04

London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

NEW YORK : THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1904

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TO
THE AUTHOR'S CHILDREN

MOST of the poems in this selection have been formerly published but are now out of print. To these others hitherto unpublished have been added.

Thanks are due to the proprietors of the *Cornhill Magazine*, the *St. James's Gazette*, and the *Spectator* for leave to reprint 'Alfred of England,' 'To Britain Half-armed,' 'Pacisque Imponere Morem,' and 'The Veterans at the Delhi Durbar.'

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HELLENICA

THE JUDGMENT OF PROMETHEUS

Strife having arisen between Zeus and Poseidon for the sake of Thetis, daughter of Nereus the sea-god, Prometheus was delivered from bondage on Caucasus and called to declare the award of Fate, known to him alone.

Now through the royal hall, for Heaven's dread
Lord

Wrought by the Fire-king's hand, the assembled
Gods,

Upon the morn appointed, thronging ranged
Expectant ; mute they moved, and took their
thrones,

Gloom on their brows, though Gods ; so dark the
dread

Of huge impending battle held their hearts,
Battle of brother Kings, Heaven and the Sea
In duel dire, convulsive war of worlds.

4 THE JUDGMENT OF PROMETHEUS

So mused they all, and highest throned the Sire,
Lord of the lightning ; on one side his Queen,
On the other, not less nigh, his chosen child
Pallas, most dear of all his race divine.
Somewhat aloof, yet in the upper hall,
The King Poseidon sate, and round his throne
Ocean, and all great Rivers of the world,
And all Sea-powers, and hoary Nereus nigh,
Nereus the ancient prophet, Thetis' sire.
Full many dooms he knew of days to be,
Yet fate of his own child no whit foresaw
More than the rest, and with the rest must wait
Sore wondering : she in a cool cave the while,
Her maiden chamber, far beneath the foam,
Trembling abode, till Iris flashing down
Should stand on the sea-cliff, and with clear
voice
Hail her betrothed, and call her forth to hear
The dread assignment of her destined lord.

Silent the Gods sate all, but now the sound
They caught of coming steps, and from the door

THE JUDGMENT OF PROMETHEUS 5

Hermes drew nigh, and at his side a Form
August, of godlike presence, paced the hall.
Like to those heavenly Gods yet diverse he.
Not quite akin he seemed nor alien quite,
Of elder race than they, no seed of Zeus,
Earthborn although divine, and conqueror crowned
From wrestling long with pain, to other Gods
Rare visitant. On his immortal brow,
Ploughed by strange pangs, anguish unknown in
Heaven,
Dwelt weightier thought than theirs, more arduous
love.

With one accord the congregated Gods
In sudden homage from their golden thrones
Rose up for reverent greeting, as he came.
Then, as he gained their midst, the Thunderer
spake :

“Hail, wondrous Titan, Earth’s mysterious son,
Prophet Prometheus ! In this hour of need
Welcome thou art returned among the Gods,
Thyself a God : assume thy place, sit there
Acknowledged arbiter : what present doubt

6 THE JUDGMENT OF PROMETHEUS

Distracts our race divine thou knowest well
Already, and already know'st no less
The doom revealed that must that doubt dissolve.
Judge then, for all the Powers of Heaven are here
Expectant, and await thy final word."

He said, and all the assembly, when he ceased,
Murmuring well-pleased assent, had turned their
gaze

There where the Titan sate, deep-plunged in
thought ;

Yet not for long ; scarce had the murmur sunk
To silence, when his answering voice was heard :

"Gods, and ye Kings of Heaven and of the Sea,
Who here demand my doom oracular,
That word of Fate ye seek, I bid you hear.
Not unto you, world-ruling Thrones divine,
Hath Fate this bride awarded whom ye woo.
Downward, far downward, bend your search, O
Gods,

To once-despis'd earth, where lies a land,
Iolcus named, nigh to Olympus' foot,

THE JUDGMENT OF PROMETHEUS 7

There seek the sea-maid's lord by Fate assigned—
A man, and born of woman, but his blood
From thy celestial ichor, Sire of Gods,
Nathless derives ; nor yet in earth nor heaven
Beats any heart more valiant or more pure.
He hath been tried and hath sore trial borne
As steel of surest temper, true at need,
Or as that ashen spear from Pelion's woods,
His weapon huge that none may wield but he,
Peleus, the son of thy son whom erewhile
The daughter of the River, once thy love,
Bare thee on earth : on Peleus falls the lot,
To him this bride is given, but with her bears
A sign inseparable, which to learn
Shall leave ye well content to yield to-day
What might infer far sorer sacrifice.
Thus hath Fate spoken : whosoe'er he be
That weds the sea-maid Thetis, unto him,
Or man or God immortal, must she bear
A son that shall be mightier than his sire.
Kings of the sky and sea, mark well this word.
No more let Peleus for his God-wooed bride

8 THE JUDGMENT OF PROMETHEUS

Be envied, or if envied, only then
For lowliness that calms the fear of fall.
What hurt have men, brief beings of a day,
If thus their sons succeeding top their power ?
No hurt but joy, to mark the younger fame
Build up the gathering glory of their race.
But if, coëval in undying prime,
Some mightier son, as needs the mightier must,
On trident or on lightning laid his hand,
With unimagined iteration dire
Rousing wild memories of an elder world,
Ruins and revolutions hidden deep
In Time's dark gulf whereto no eyes revert,
Far other deed were that, far other doom."

He ended, and the assembly all amazed
At that unlooked-for sentence, in great awe
On the two sovran Brethren bent their eyes.
No whit had either moved, but on the Seer
Kept their large gaze majestic, fixed and full.
Then, as one impulse in the twain had stirred,
From both with one accord their high assent

THE JUDGMENT OF PROMETHEUS 9

Rolled through the solemn stillness, deep and clear :
“So be it as thou sayest, Voice of Fate.”

Therewith in confirmation those great Gods,
Immortal and imperial, bowed their brows.
Heaven stirred at that dread sign, and Earth afar
Thrice rocked responsive, heaving all her seas.

Again the Thunderer spake : “Titan, thy task
Is ended, but not ended be thy stay
Among thy peers, this company of Gods.
Here is thy place prepared, here dwell content,
Our counsellor at need, our new-won friend.
Rest here at ease, and learn the unfolded tale
By all these ages wrought in Heaven and Earth,
And changeful tribes of men, thy chosen care,
Once loved by thee alone ; but now, be sure,
There is no God that hath not linked his name,
Perchance his race, to human hope and fear.
Stay then, for change by change is recompensed,
And new things now wax old, and old are new.”

He spake, and all the approving throng divine
With acclamation free applauded loud,

10 THE JUDGMENT OF PROMETHEUS

Bidding the Titan welcome and all hail ;
Henceforth, they cried, a counsellor of Heaven,
Interpreter of Fate, and friend of Man.
But when their greeting ceased, and sought reply,
He raised his eyes, and with slow-moving gaze
Looked round on that celestial company.
Then with deep voice and mild he answering said :
 “ Deem not, O Gods, I lightly prize your call.
Thought of inveterate wrong, no longer now
By hourly instant anguish riveted,
Hath fallen from my soul, and left her free
To sweep on ample circles of her wing
Amid dim visions, slowly growing clear,
Of rolling age on age, her proper realm,
Her proper lore ; yet all I gladly learn :
Either of this new kindlier life of Heaven,
Or of that once-scorned world of suffering men,
Whereto your world is linked for ever now,
Right gladly would I hear, yet not as one
Quite shut from knowledge all these exiled years.
Think ye my Mother dear, deep-murmuring Earth,
Could find no means of message, when I lay

THE JUDGMENT OF PROMETHEUS 11

On the bare rock between her breast and
Heaven ?—

That starry Heaven that made me know my life
Not unbefriended of celestial Powers,
Though other than Olympian ; year by year,
Through height ineffable of frozen air,
Stooped the keen stars, and graved upon my soul,
In fateful characters of golden fire,
Deep and more deep, their slow-unfolding lore.
And more of what they told I too must tell,
Sometime, not now : enough of things to be
Hath been to-day revealed. But now, O Gods,
Farewell ; I may not tarry for your voice,
Your friendly voice ; but other voices call,
Inaudible to you, but to this heart
Admonitory, o'ermastering, deeply dear.
Yea, my racked being yearns for great repose,
Deep sleep and sweet, almost the sleep of death :
And after that, long time my life must pause
In meditative musing, now no more
Pierced by abrupt assault of arrowy pain.
Not here my place of rest ; far hence I seek

12 THE JUDGMENT OF PROMETHEUS

Beyond or world of Gods or world of men,
The Tower of ancient Kronos, where he dwells
Amid the Blessed Isles, his final home,
The habitation of a holy calm.

There evermore the West-winds dewy-winged,
Borne o'er the Ocean-river, lightly breathe ;
And over all that sweet and solemn realm
Broods a mild golden light of mellow beam,
Less bright by far than this celestial splendour,
A low warm light, as of eternal eve.

And there are gathered, or shall gather soon,
All my dear kindred, offspring of the Earth,
The brotherhood Titanic, finding there
Harbour desired, and after sore exile
Rejoining well content their ancient King.
Nor these alone ; for to that saving shore
A race far other surely shall be called,
Of seed far humbler sprung, but by decree
Of dooms august, that doom both God and
Man,

Raised to high meed, the spirits of just men
Made here companions of immortal Gods ;

THE JUDGMENT OF PROMETHEUS 13

Themselves perchance—grudge not, O seed of
Heaven !—

Destined, despite their clay, to conquer death.
There for long years, how long I know not yet,
My lot is fixed with that dear folk to dwell ;
But not for ever ; sometime yet to be
(Thus far I know and tell) I come again,
To counsel, and to do, and to endure.
But whether to this glorious hall of Heaven,
Or whether unto Man's long-suffering brood,
I know not—nay nor even surely know
If this my shape wherein I stand to-day
Be changed at my new coming : on such wise
Wears my great Mother many a form and name,
Yet holds through all her one identity.
Thus may I too. Or if the time shall come
When all the storëd counsel of my soul
Is spent, and all mine oracles outworn,
There shall not fail a prophet in my place,
Some hand to bear the torch, new wisdom bringing
Wiser than Promethéan ; yet that too
Taught him not only by the all-teacher Time,

14 THE JUDGMENT OF PROMETHEUS

But by long toil and travail, hate and love,
Design, and disappointment, and defeat,
And by rapt converse held with Earth, and Stars,
And with deep hidden well-springs of the world.

But now to my much-yearned-for rest afar
I must begone. Wherefore, for that long way,
I pray ye, deathless Presences of Heaven,
Suffer one moment in your shining halls
The appointed convoy that shall bear me hence.
They wait without, and now are near at hand.
My strength is spent in speaking : Gods, farewell."

He ceased, but with his word they saw descend
Two Shapes benign that with wide-hovering wing,
Noiseless as birds' that through the brooding night
Flit all unheard, and of like feathery form,
Close to the Titan's side came floating down.
Well known the one, and welcome even in Heaven,
For even in Heaven who shall not welcome Sleep ?
But round his brother twin a halo hung,
Wellnigh invisible, a filmy veil,
And his calm lips were paler : through the Gods

THE JUDGMENT OF PROMETHEUS 15

A brief scarce-heeded shudder lightly ran
At that mild Presence, for they looked on Death.
Not for dominion came he there that day,
But helpmeet of his brother, bound with him
To welcome succour of the weary God.
So to his side those Forms fraternal drew.
His faint eyes half had closed, his failing head
Sank on the breast of Sleep : together both
Raised him with reverent touch, and spread their
 plumes
Inaudibly. One beat of those wide wings,
Fraught with their sacred burden, bare them forth ;
And in a moment, lo, the heavenly hall
Held them no more, but far they fled on
Down through the glimmering deep of empty air.

ACHILLES

ATHWART the sunrise of our western day
The form of great Achilles, high and clear,
Stands forth in arms, wielding the Pelian spear.
The sanguine tides of that immortal fray,
Swept on by Gods, around him surge and sway,
Wherethrough the helms of many a warrior peer,
Strong men and swift, their tossing plumes uprear.
But stronger, swifter, goodlier he than they,
More awful, more divine. Yet mark anigh ;
Some fiery pang hath rent his soul within,
Some hovering shade his brows encompasseth.
What gifts hath Fate for all his chivalry ?
Even such as hearts heroic oftenest win ;
Honour, a friend, anguish, untimely death.

RHODES

BEYOND the ages far away,
When yet the fateful Earth was young,
And 'mid her seas unfurrowed lay
Her lands uncited and unsung,
The Gods in council round their King
Were met for her apportioning.

Then shook the Sire the golden urn
Wherefrom the lots leapt forth to view,
And God by God took up in turn
The symbol of his kingdom due ;
Till each had linked some heavenly name
To human hope and human fame.

When lo, a footstep on the floor,
A radiance in the radiant air ;
A God august, forgot before,
Too late arrived, was lastly there—
The Sun-god from his fiery car
Unyoked beneath the evening star.

Then said the Sire : “ For thee no lot,
O Sun, of all the lots is drawn,
For thy bright chariot, well I wot,
Hath held thee since the broadening dawn.
But come, for all the gods are fain
For thy fair sake to cast again.”

“ Nay now, for me is little need
New lots to cast ” (so spake the Sun) ;
“ One isle assign me for the meed
Of that diurnal course I run :
Behold beneath the glimmering sea
A land unclaimed, the land for me.”

Therewith he shot an arrowy ray
Down through the blue Ægean deep ;
Thrilled by that magic dart of day,
The hidden isle shook off her sleep.
She moved, she rose, and with the morn
She touched the air, and Rhodes was born.

Then all about that starry sea
There ran a gratulating stir,
Her fellows for all time to be
In choral congress greeting her,
With air-borne song and flashing smiles,
A sisterhood of glorious isles.

And still as from his car on high
Her Lord his daily splendour sent,
She joyed to know his gladdening eye
On her, his best-beloved, was bent :
And ever in that fostering gaze
Grew up the stature of her praise.

What early wondrous might was hers,
The craftsmanship of cunning hands,
Of that wise art the harbingers
Whose fame is uttered through all lands.
Then Rhodians by the Sun-god's side
Besought Athene to abide.

She came, she loved the Rosy Isle,
And Lindos reared her eastward fane ;
To Rhodian chiefs she brought the while
New thoughts, new valiance in her train,
New hope to bind about their brows
The olive of her Father's house.

Then won Diagoras that prize
Yet fairer than his forest crown,
That voice whereby in godlike wise
His name through time goes deathless down.
In graven gold her walls along
Flamed forth the proud Pindaric song.

She too her own Athenians stirred
To that fair deed of chivalry,
That high imperishable word
That set the Rhodian Dorieus free,
And linked in unison divine
Her Lindian to her Attic shrine.

Bright hours, too brief ! The shadowing hand
Half barbarous of a giant form
Even the strong Sun-god's loyal land
Must wrap in mist of sombre storm,
When Hellas bowed, her birthright gone,
Beneath the might of Macedon.

Yet even then not lightly bound
Was Rhodes of any vanquisher ;
With all his engines thundering round
The City-stormer¹ stormed not her.
In vain : anon the Roman doom
Had sealed her spirit in the tomb.

¹ Demetrius Poliorcetes.

Long ages slept she. Then a dream
Once more across her slumber shone,
Cleaving the dark, a quickening gleam
All-glorious as in days foregone ;
A new God's presence nobler far
Than any Lord of sun or star.

He showed her him whose prophet eye
Hailed him with homage first and best ;
"For John," he said, "my herald high,
Stand forth, a champion of the West,
Sealed with my name, and his in mine,
Our vanguard in the war divine."

She rose, she stemmed the Moslem flood
That roared and ravined for her life,
Till drop by drop the knightly blood
Was drained in that stupendous strife ;
Then, sole amid the o'erwhelming sea,
Sank in heroic agony.

Twice born, twice slain ! all this is o'er
Three hundred years ; yet may there be
(So strong a life is in thy core),
O Rhodes, another birth for thee.
Look up, behold this banner new,
The white cross on the field of blue.

Through all the Isles the broadening light
Creeps on a sure but lingering way,
And half are in the fading night
And half are in the dawning day :
Thou too, O Rhodes, shalt make thee one
Once more with freedom and the Sun.

DORIEUS

In the year 406 B.C., seven years after the annihilation of the Athenian army before Syracuse, the Athenian fleet took prisoner one Dorieus, a member of the great Rhodian house of the Eratidai, who had brought ships to the aid of Sparta against Athens. Dorieus had himself been thrice crowned at Olympia, and his father Diagoras had won the boxing-match there in the year 464, when Pindar wrote for him the ode called the Seventh Olympian, which the Rhodians engraved in letters of gold in the temple of Athene at Lindos.

It was the custom of the time either to release prisoners of war for a ransom or else to put them to death. The Athenians asked no ransom of Dorieus, but set him free on the spot.

QUEENLY Athens, those were years of anguish,
Since thy proud host perished o'er the foam,
Left to rot upon the field, or languish
Pent in Dorian prison-pits of doom :
From that dire defeat
Turn'st thou back to meet
Foes without and fiercer foes at home.

Yet in those nine years, when need was sorest,
How thy high heart stirs and strives away !
Still the Queen of Light, whom thou adorest,
Breathes some brightness through the dolorous day :
As we read, the page
Glowes with noble rage ;
Deadly wounded, thou hast turned to bay.

But, more glorious than thy glorious anger,
Shines thy sudden mercy in its stead ;
Clutched by death, nor agony nor languor
Bows the bearing of thy regal head :
Fearless yet and free
Sayest thou, " I am she,
Athens yet, though half my force be fled.

" Ay, amid this darkened age and dwindled,
Still my sons have memory of their fame ;
Now for one fair moment see rekindled
One divine spark of the ancient flame ;

Know them, now as then,
Marathonian men,
Champions of the high Hellenic name.

“ Rhodian Dorieus, thou hast fought to tame me,
Fought and failed, and yielded to my spear :
Hadst thou conquered, conquest could not shame
me,

So to thee too can no shame come near ;
Still thine eager sight
Keeps the battle's light,
Still thy brave brow fronts me without fear.

“ But to mine eyes other light around thee
Hovers yet upon thy clustering hair,
Light of silvery olive-leaves that crown'd thee
When the Great Games hailed thee victor there ;
When the mid-month moon
Heard the swelling tune
Heralding the athlete strong and fair.

“Nor in vain the Theban eagle, soaring
High in heaven the morning clouds among,
Bare thy sire’s name for eternal storing,
Sealed in labyrinth of splendid song ;
Still in golden line
From the Lindian shrine
Flames his praise the sunlit seas along.

“By the spell of those Pindaric splendours,
By the old Athenian chivalry,
By thy sire, and by my sons, defenders
Of that God who crowned both him and thee,
Noble Rhodian foe,
Gird thy sword and go,
Athens gives thee greeting, thou art free.”

KALLIKRATIDAS

The Athenians' magnanimity towards Dorieus was even surpassed in the same year by the Spartan admiral Kallikratidas, a noble exception among his countrymen, who, having taken certain Athenians prisoners of war in Lesbos, set them all at liberty, declaring that he would never keep Hellenes in bondage.

A few months afterwards Kallikratidas was killed, leading his fleet at the great battle of Arginusæ.

“I STRIVE with Athens but to win once more
Her equal sword among the guardian band
Of powers Hellenic for the Hellenic land.
Brothers, bear back this message to her door.
There lies the foe eternal, there the war
Holy and just.” He pointed with his hand
Eastward to Susa, o’er the Mysian strand
And sinuous bays of that ill-trusted shore.

O heart heroic, Sparta's noblest son,
At what a height thy soaring spirit burns
Star-like, and floods thy kind with quickening fire!
Too soon, great heart, thy generous race is run,
Too soon the scattered night of hate returns,
And dark Lysander's unrelenting ire.

PINDAR

SON of the lightning, fair and fiery star,
Strong-winged imperial Pindar, voice divine,
Let these deep draughts of thy enchanted wine
Lift me with thee in soarings high and far,
Prouder than Pegaseän, or the car
Wherein Apollo rapt the huntress maid.
So let me range mine hour, too soon to fade
To the dull presence of the things that are.
Yet know that even amid this jarring noise
Of hates, loves, creeds, together heaped and hurled,
Some echo faint of grace and grandeur stirs
From thy sweet Hellas, home of noble joys.
First fruit and best of all the western world,
Whate'er we hold of beauty, half is hers.

PHILHELLENE

I

GRANT me all the store of knowledge, grant me
all the wealth that is,
Swiftly, surely, I would answer, Give me rather,
give me this :

Bear me back across the ages to the years that are
no more,
Give me one sweet month of spring-time on the
old Saronic shore ;

Not as one who marvels mournful, seeing with a
sad desire
Shattered temples, crumbling columns, ashes of a
holy fire ;

But a man with men Hellenic doing that which
there was done,

There among the sons of Athens, not a stranger
but a son.

There the blue sea gave them greeting when their
triremes' conquering files

Swam superb with rhythmic oarage through the
multitude of isles.

There they met the Mede and brake him, beat
him to his slavish East ;

Who was he, a guest unwished-for bursting on
their freeman's feast ?

There the ancient celebration to the maiden queen
of fight

Led the long august procession upward to the
pillared height.

Man with man they met together in a kindly life
and free,
And their gods were near about them in the
sunlight or the sea.

There the light of hidden Wisdom sprang to
their compelling quest ;
Ray by ray the dawn from Hellas rose upon the
wakening West.

Every thought of all their thinking swayed the
world for good or ill,
Every pulse of all their life-blood beats across the
ages still.

II

THE LOST BROTHER AMONG THE NATIONS

HE is no more, that brother brave and fair,
Whose living made the whole world glorious ;
His wings are closed, and for no sigh or prayer
Shall that bright brother fly again to us.

What though the earth hath many a son full strong
To the wide brotherhood of peoples born,
These to a dark and wingless race belong,
And with the mother for their lost one mourn.

Alas, and yet of old time not in vain
The queen of Eryx and Idalion
Wept sore for her Adonis, till again
From the grim flood of envious Acheron

The longed-for Hours slow treading, soft and slow,
Bare back her love, delivered from the deep ;
But our Adonis no return may know ;
He sleeps in silence an unending sleep.

Far far away in some enchanted glade,
The world's most secret and most solemn place,
He sleeps unchanging in the twilight shade,
Nor life nor death upon his restful face.

Yet some, by grace granted to faithful love,
Are thither rapt to gaze upon the shrine,
Where on his calm couch in the glimmering grove
Lie the bright limbs of the lost boy divine.

Thenceforth if any time there come to these
Some sweeter melody, some sight more fair,
They dream they catch his call among the trees,
His golden wings upon the whispering air.

III

AY, let our fates be such, for such they are :
So ordereth the voice oracular
Of the slow-moving, ever-moving years,
Too stern, too kind, to stay them for our fears ;
And our own breasts that know a younger age
Our creditor for ampler heritage.
Yet whoso anywhiles hath lingered long
In that high realm of unforgotten song,
This man, methinks, shall never quite set free
His soul from that constraining phantasy ;
Still sometimes in a lonely place and fair,
Where the warm south-winds stir the rainy air
And sigh themselves to silence, shall his ear
In that low wistful sighing seem to hear
From dreamy regions of the elder earth
A mournful music sweeter than our mirth ;
Some harping of the God of golden head
By Delian waters wakened from the dead,
Some voice of wailing wood-nymphs amorous
Far off, within the folds of Maenalus.

THE BOY AND THE DOLPHIN

A BAND of boys went bathing to the sea,
All fair, but one the first in youthful bloom :
Him marked a Dolphin, tenderest of his kind,
Far off, and joined his gambols in the wave.
And a great love grew up between the twain :
For day by day the boy came to the shore,
And day by day his faithful friend was there,
And on his back would bear him merrily
Amid the dashing waves, a burden dear.
But on an unblest morn, what time their mirth
Was happiest, and the boy in trustful glee
Upon his playmate stretched his limbs at length,
And backward leaned, and shouted to his steed,
Ay me, the sharp spear of the Dolphin's fin
Pierced his fair side and spilt his tender life.

38 THE BOY AND THE DOLPHIN

So there was no more play between the twain.
But that poor friend, perceiving how the foam
Was crimsoned all with blood about his track,
And the sweet voice, which was his music, hushed,
Knew that all joy was slain, and agony
Seized him, and he desired himself to die.

So to the beach he bore him mournfully
Amid the dashing waves, a burden dear ;
And on the sand he laid him softly down,
And by his side gave up his grieving soul.

But the boy's comrades, sorrowing for their mate,
Took up the corpse and washed it of the blood,
And laid it in a grave beside the sea,
Beside the sea, above the wave-washed sand,
And by his side they laid the Dolphin dead
For sake of that true love he bare the boy.

THE LOVE-LORE OF MOSCHUS

(IDYL VI)

PAN loved his neighbour Echo ; Echo loved
A gamesome Satyr ; he, by her unmoved,
Loved only Lyde ; thus through Echo, Pan,
Lyde, and Satyr, Love his circle ran.
Thus all, while their true lovers' hearts they grieved,
Were scorned in turn, and what they gave received.
O all Love's scorers, learn this lesson true :
Be kind to Love that he be kind to you.

THE LAMENT OF MOSCHUS

(IDYL III. 106-111)

AY me, ay me, the mallow in the mead,
The parsley green, the anise-tendril's ring,
Fade all and die, but in due season freed
Grow yet again and greet another spring :

But we, we men, the mighty and the strong,
Wise-witted men, when our one life is o'er,
Low laid in earth sleep silently and long
A sleep that wins no waking, evermore.

THE OLYMPIC HERMES

(A statue found at Olympia and ascribed to Praxiteles.
On the arm of Hermes is a child said to be Bacchus.)

FROM the dim North, from Ister's fount afar,
Behind the blast of winter, where abide
The Hyperborean folk, a baneless land,
Came Heracles, and bare the silvery bough
To shade the plain beside Alpheus' bed,
And be a crown of valiance evermore.

Therefore through all the golden prime of Earth,
When her best race was glad beneath the day,
Endured that praise ; and as of stars the Sun
Is first, and Gold of metals, as of all
Earth's primal gifts to man is Water best,
So he who spake for understanding ears

Words of divine assignment, crowns of song,
Of all fair feasts the Olympic deemed most fair.

Here was the home of Zeus, the shrines were here
Of Gods and sons of Gods, his lineage high,
So many ages worshipt where they dwelt,
So many ages after, all forgot ;
Whether their carven forms by robber hands
Were rapt beyond the sea, or ground to dust,
Or whether in the kindly breast of Earth
Patient they slept, even as dead bones of men.
Sleeping or dead alike they sank from sight,
And through the ages no man recked to mourn
For their mild brows and presence tutelar,
Similitude divine, divinely wrought.
But now once more with keen remorseful eyes,
And hunger of the heart for beauty dead,
Men seek them sorrowing, and with painful hands
Upturn the sacred soil till, maimed and rare,
Strange clouded fragments of the ancient glory,
Late lingerers of the company divine,
Arise, like glimmering phantoms of a dream.
Yet even in ruin of their marble limbs

They breathe of that far world wherefrom they
came,
Of liquid light and harmonies serene,
Lost halls of Heaven and large Olympian air.

Thus slept He long, thus hath He risen so late,
The Son of Maia : that the earth no more
Holds him in night sepulchral, this to him
Is nought, or eyes of gazers ; his own world
He bears within him, all untoucht of Time.
Yet haply if thou gaze upon the God
In reverent silence, even to thee shall flow
From that high presence of the unconscious form
Some effluent spell, whereby thy calm'd soul
Shall be indrawn to that diviner world
Wherein his soul hath being, fair and free.
Unharm'd of chance and ruin, lo, his head
Bends with half-smile benign above his charge,
The little child, the son of Semele,
Snatched from the fierce tongues of celestial fire,
The insupportable blaze of very Zeus,
His mother's doom ; but from his baby soul

The terror of that night hath passed away,
And left him blithe on his mild brother's arm,
His tender hand on that strong shoulder prest.

Hermes, was this thy gift? Yet well thou knewest
How wild a sway that babe full-grown would
wield,

The God of frenzied brain and blood afire,
Fired howsoe'er divinely : yea, but thou
Could'st turn these too to glory and delight,
Spirit more pure and loftier life of man.
For thou into man's teeming thoughts pent up,
And inarticulate fancies, didst inbreathe
Voice like thine own ; and passion's tuneless storm
Sweeping therethrough made sudden melodies,
The sweeter for its frenzy, for from thee
Came spells of song and speech, from thee the lyre.
And where the pillared city's festal folk
In sunny mart or shadowed portico
Were met for converse, or where athlete youth
In emulous games honoured the all-giving Gods,
And native Earth, and immemorial power

Of quickening Rivers that right well had reared
Their growing manhood, thy grave smile was there.

Interpreter of Heaven, these were not all,
Not all thy gifts, though plenteous ; nay, though
these

Be very good, yet one, the best, remains.

For thou, fair lord, thou also, having filled
Man's little life so full with act and thought,
Leadest him lastly down the darkling road
To that dim realm where griefs and gains are dead,
Or live as dreams dreamed by a dream-like shade.
Were they indeed aught more beneath the noon
Of this brave Sun that must himself wax cold ?
Who knoweth ? Come, dear Guardian, Guide
divine ;

For this thou art arisen out of earth
That held thee there in Elis sleeping well.
Give thou the babe to Rhea ; she no less,
Mysterious Mother of an elder Heaven,
Hath store of spells to heal the coming gust
Of his young madness ; take thy serpent-wand,
And gather to thee those thy subject souls

Born out of due time in an alien world,
To whom are given, in toil or in repose,
So rare, so faint, thine advent and thine aid.
They shall not shrink or flutter, as the ghosts
Of those impure the avenging arrows slew,
But follow firmly on, until they come
To some fair congress of the noble dead,
Set free from flying pain and flying joy,
There find their home, and rest for ever there.

LOCA CARMINE DIGNA

ARCADIA

THE TEMPLE AT BASSAE, DEDICATED TO APOLLO THE
HELPER BY THE PEOPLE OF PHIGALEIA
AFTER A PLAGUE

OF all fair scenes let this be called most fair ;
Not for the prospect only, plain and hill
Upsoaring to the solitary snow
Or merged in silver shining of the sea,
And these grey columns faintly flushed with rose,
Divine in ruin—not for these alone :
The Presences of Gods are all around.
But now amid the oaks of Arcady
Pan passed me, hidden by the russet leaves
That trembled at his coming, and I knew
By their glad shuddering that the God was there ;
And far to the East, where stern Taygetus

Rears his white ridge against the boundless blue,
Lo, in the hanging cloud-wreaths hardly seen,
Stalk the dread phantoms of the Dorian Twins,
Still tutelar, and o'er the tomb forlorn
Of their discrown'd Sparta watching well.

But chieffiest where I stand is holy ground.
Helper Apollo ! by that name revered
In this fair shrine with song and sacrifice,
What sacred prompting urged the votive zeal
Of Phigaleian folk so high to build
Thy temple, lone amid the lonely hills?
Perchance some townsman fleeing in dark dread
From the plague-stricken city of his folk
Paused in this place ; then suddenly he was ware
Of One who stood beside him, whose bright head
Makes even Olympus brighter when he comes,
And the sweet air wherein Gods breathe more sweet :
No rattling darts of death his shoulder bare,
As once at Troy, nor like to night he came,
But robed in dewy radiance of the dawn.
Almost he might have seemed his Healer Son,
Koronis' child, yet more august than he.

“Return unto thine house ; the plague is stayed ” :
So spake he ; and the wondering man returned
And found the vision true, and told his folk
Of that bright God who helped them, and they
heard

And worshipt, and with full hearts fervently
On this high seat, where in the vision stood
That mighty Helper of the hurts of men,
They reared this pillared temple chastely fair,
This sister of the Athenian maiden-shrine,
This Dorian mood breathing through silent stone.

O noble symbol of a noble life,
A life wherein all vigour and all grace,
All quickening impulse and all chastening thought,
The inspiration of things old and new,
Of high tradition and of bold advance,
Should meet to mould a human soul divine,
Serene and strong, a healthful harmony ;
And all this goodly thing be consecrate
Unto that Power of Healing, whose high task
Is wrought of Man's hands and of God's alike,
Of God as Man, at his most godlike then.

Verily such life were as this mountain-shrine,
Which seems, albeit of sculptured pediment,
Of metope and of cornice left forlorn,
Yet not less holy therefore or less fair,
Only more filled with moving majesty.

. ITHOME

IT is no God that haunts the cloven crest
Of this Messenian mountain of old fame,
But thou, the peer of Gods, immortal name,
Epameinondas, whom these heights attest
Saviour and Father of a race opprest.
Even now the diadem of thy towered wall
Not quite has crumbled, and shall well recall
That day of pride, when, at the imperial hest
Of thy strong stamp and splendour of thy spears,
Messenia stirred, and sprang to reassume
Her ancient heritage of the Dorian peers,
Grim Sparta's prey ; and after dolorous gloom
Of that long death through thrice a hundred years
Arose in scorn of tyrants from the tomb.

A TOMB AT ATHENS

HE goeth forth unto the unknown land,
Where wife nor child may follow ; thus far tell
The lingering clasp of hand in faithful hand,
And that brief carven legend, *Friend farewell.*

O pregnant sign, profound simplicity !
All passionate pain and wild remonstrating
Being wholly purged, leave this mere memory,
Deep but not harsh, a sad and sacred thing.

Not otherwise to the hall of Hades dim
He fares, than if some summer eventide
A message, not unlooked for, came to him
Bidding him rise up presently and ride

Some few hours' journey to a friendly house,
Through fading light, to where within the West,
Behind the shadow of Cithaeron's brows,
The calm-eyed sun sank to his rosy rest.

SYRACUSE

THIS is the seventh morning since mine eyes
Beheld the hallowed plain of Marathon.
Seven days : but in the story of the Earth
Is writ, From Marathon to Syracuse
Are seventy years and seven ; for so long
Endured that city's prime which was the world's.
In this blue slumbering harbour of the Bay
Clashed the great combat of extreme despair,
The agony of Athens : those grey slopes
Hold yet the cruel quarries where the sun
Beat fierce upon the pain of fainting limbs,
Which erst upon the great day of the feast
Rode radiant to Athene's citadel.

City of Theseus, thou too, having dared
Much nobly, like thy champion prince of old,

Wert lastly over-daring to thy fall.

But not on those dark ways shall Memory pause,
Dark ways of Erebus and hounds of hell ;

Rather shall she bethink her with what front

He met the twy-form monster, Minotaur,

Unterrified, and smote, and ended him,

And with what thanks round that bold rescuer
thronged

The clinging hands and glad adoring eyes

Of those thirteen, helped by his hand from death.

Like danger threatened then the hopes of Earth,
O saviour City, when the barbarous host
Swarmed westward, and the multitude of isles
Trembled, and Thebes Kadmeän, and the soil
Which bred Achilles ; but thy champion arm
Took up the perilous challenge, and struck home.

LUGANO

Te liquidi flevere lacus

WHAT time beneath the southern face
Of the two-fronted Alpine pile
I lingered for a little space
Where the blue lakes in sunlight smile,

Full fondly memory may recall
How all the purple peaks aglow
Burned o'er the steep-set woods that wall
The length of lordly Lario.

Yet was not that the best-loved time,
Nor yet when on the evening air
The strange soft bells with answering chime
Made sound as sweet as sights were fair.

But this it was that made my gaze
With dreamful reminiscence dim,
That through the shining nights and days
There seemed a voice that spake of him

Who surely on these shores had found,
As even on his own Mantuan plain,
The graver grace wherewith he crowned
The wild and sweet Sicilian strain ;

Who haply in the summer-tide,
Where browsing goats the chestnut stir,
Heard from the mountain's shaggy side
The singing of the vine-dresser.

Beneath such pure nocturnal skies
Menalcas' carol rang afar,
And Daphnis hailed with hope-lit eyes
The welcome wonder of the Star.

O sweetest singer, stateliest head
And gentlest ever crowned with bay,
It seemed that from the holy dead
Thy soul drew near to mine that day.

And all fair places to my view
Were fairer ; such delight I had
To deem that these thy presence knew
And at thy coming oft were glad :

That these to thy last going gave
Thine own brave Umbro's elegy ;
For thee Cerisio's, Lario's wave,
The limpid lakes made moan for thee.

VALLOMBROSA

ENGLISH wanderer, where Etruria sings to thee
Songs of mountain and of forest fair,
Each clear stream with its beech-leaf burden brings
to thee

Days long flown, wherein Milton wandered there.

Scenes youth lit for his ardour and his purity
Age raised up when his outer eye was dim :
Vallombrosa, thy name through all futurity
Blends sweet tones with a sweeter tone from him.

HIGH STREET FELL, WESTMORELAND

(So called from bearing traces of a Roman road)

IMPERIAL Rome, whose footprint sparsely seen
Stamps the wide face of thy devolved demesne,
Whose mighty works in mighty ruin hurled
Lie rare and crumbling o'er the western world ;
Where'er thy circling galleries now no more
Echo to beast and man their murderous roar ;
Or where thy conquering arches high and far
Bestride the grey bed of the wondering Gard :—
Here too, even here, high on our lonely fell,
The paven mountains of thy presence tell.
Here where the red deer roam, the curlews cry,
The Italian watchword rang beneath the sky :
Here in proud march, the indignant dales above,

Flashed the bronze birds of Capitolian Jove :
Here to rapt thought thy Phantom shall arise,
A faded light of lordship in her eyes,
And by sad gaze in silence eloquent
Charge on our race her dread admonishment :
“The word of Rome to Britain, queen to queen ;
Would'st thou still be? Be not what I have been.
What though thy standard with true title claim
A milder mastery, a nobler name,
What though far nations in the shadowing awe
Of thy wide rule lie lapt in peace and law,
Earth-girdling armies shall no whit avail
In thy dark hour, if in thyself thou fail.
Boast not thine arms that stretch so large and
 long,
The heart, the heart—that keep thou pure and
 strong !
Let not the world, let not God mourn once more
A giant empire cankered at the core.”

THE SPIRIT OF THE FELL

DEAR foster-father, Spirit of the Fell,
Haunter of lonely cliff or hidden well,
How wert thou wont, by what fair ways and wild,
To lead unseen thy glad enchanted child !
For first his path was o'er the mountain's feet,
Where sight and sound of wood and moorland
meet :

Thence might he hear, the happy summer through,
The unwearying murmur of the ring-dove's coo ;
There are the flowers, more fair than gardens grow,
That by moist rock or scattered boskage blow ;
Parnassian stars of tender-veined white,
Or the frail wind-flower, the spring's delight ;
Thick-teeming woodruff, dear in balmy death,
And, best of all, the wind-swept heather's breath.

And therewithal would come to him the sound,
Or full or faint, of falling waters round,
Where fern and birch beside the deep-cleft pool
Quiver in bright spray of the torrent cool,
Tempting the headlong plunger from the rock
To his glad leap and rushing rapturous shock.
Then while his feet through broadening upland
rise,

Thy hand would lead him on toward the skies.
The moss grows greyer and the rock more bare,
The wind's voice changes in the lonely air.
Then higher yet, beyond the noise of rills,
He drank the holy silence of the hills.
There tarrying late he best might know aright
The choral starry congress of the night ;
And his still soul in free exulting awe
Adored the majesty of duteous law.
No further needs the spell that led him on ;
He is alone, his gentle guide is gone.
Nay, rather deem, both spirits, thou and he,
Blend each with each and with Infinity.

FOLKESTONE CLIFF

(When a tunnel under the English Channel was planned.)

“LET there be Sea,” God said, and there was Sea ;
And in the midst thereof an Island set,
Wherein the roving strength of nations met,
And reared a rugged fortress of the free.
“Take back thy Sea,” men say, if men they be
Who thus their fathers’ perilous years forget,
Nor reck the gathering thunder-cloud, which yet
Looms large from many an envious tyranny.

Groppers for gold, come forth ! Let be awhile
The stifling dark of your disloyal mine :

Here where no feverish fumes the sense beguile,
Where reinless waves race by in endless line,
Here stand ! Behind you lies the guarded Isle,
And on your brows beats free the guardian brine.

1883.

A COMMON IN KENT

AMID the heather dry and dark
The Spring-time throws her magic spark :
The gorse-flower's bursting blooms unfold
A thousand isles of glowing gold ;
Up through his winter wrack outworn
Leaps into life the bracken's horn ;
The snowy birch-stems hardly seen
Shine through their sunlit garb of green ;
The bronze-hued oak-leaves haste to follow,
With welcome to the homing swallow :
On silent wing the swallows sweep,
They hunt and play, they build and sleep ;
The lark that hailed the hope of spring
Still keeps his joyous carolling ;

While a new voice of richer note
Pours nightly from the impassioned throat.

So through the fairy forest ground
The seasons run their lovely round.
The wilding fruit-trees bloom their day,
The starry splendour of the may :
The peerless wild-rose petals breathe
Their fragrance to the rugged heath ;
Till last the sombre heather swells
To August pomp of purple bells.

Then when all flowery days are done,
In Autumn's mild Elysian sun
The russet bracken lights the earth,
As bright in dying as in birth.
Nor even though deepest winter brood
Yields our fair haunt to mournful mood ;
Then gleams the holly glad and free
In godlike youth immortally ;
The tawny pine-stems unafraid
Rear their dark towers of changeless shade,
And by warm winds or wintry blown
Murmur their deep mysterious tone.

The boons of all the moorland year,
Each following each, they all are here,
Bidding the son of Northland wild
Be of his exile half beguiled,
Albeit some few leagues apart
Groans the grim city's rumbling mart.
A rarer fortune who shall find ?
So near in place, so far in kind ;
To dwell with woodland sight and song,
Yet free to join the workers' throng.

Dear Brood, for your sake Heaven hath blest
This islet of our heathery nest.

TINTAGEL

ALL the terror of the trampling Ocean,
All the valour of the rooted rock,
Now in fiercer now in fainter combat,
Clash together here with countering shock.

All along the grim defiant rampart
Fling the rolling seas their torrent wrack,
Leap and leap in wild repeated onset,
Roar and reel and fall in fountains back.

Long the way those giant waves have journeyed,
Warmed by Gulf suns, chill from Labrador,
Blended streams amid the broad Atlantic,
Doomed to break on stern Tintagel's shore.

Tristram, Mark, the weird of wondrous Arthur,
Fair Isolt, and all the fateful tale,
Phantom forms about their phantom fortress,
Haunt the twilight, hovering in the gale.

Round the cliff the prow of friend or foeman
Swings within the port with sudden wheel ;
From the deck there darts a gleam of armour,
In the wind there comes a clash of steel.

With the sound or on the gleam they vanish ;
Crumble all their castle-walls away ;
Laid full low in immemorial ruin,
None may read their record maimed and grey.

Only ever at their post appointed
Stand the swart stern crags enduringly,
Greaves of Britain, where the mightiest Island
Plants a firm foot in the mightiest Sea.

CHAMPIONS OF ITALY

I

Two Chiefs for her Arm and her Voice New Italy
found at her need,

Garibaldi breaker of bondage, Mazzini sower of
seed.

By the fair Ligurian gulf were the lives of the
twain begun,

On the God-wrought Terrace gigantic, the ledges
that look to the sun,

Where the gold fruits glow thro' the woods dark-
leaved by the red sea-caves,

And the mild sea laughs to the mountain with
numberless laughter of waves ;

Where the opaline light of the olive leaps forth to
the stir of the breeze,

And above and beneath thro' her boughs gleams
the blue of the skies and the seas ;

Where Columbus roamed and mused till his lonely
purpose was grown

To the height of his chosen achievement, the
winning of worlds unknown.

Long time he too, Garibaldi, beyond the Atlantic
foam

In the worlds of Columbus wandered, but now to
the land of his home

He was come at her call to her side with the west
wind out of the sea

To smite, nor stay from the smiting, till Italy's
children be free.

O never was champion or chief since the story of
battles began

More apt for a perilous venture, more lionlike
lordly a man.

Nor second the force of his fellow, from exile
arisen again,

Mazzini, Seër prophetic, the Leader and Lover
of men.

For an ardour of old consumed him, the flame of
an inborn fire

Fed from the first in his heart, when, a child in the
home of his sire,

He grieved for the scorned and the smitten, and
glowed to the deeds of the brave

Who gleam thro' the dim generations, more mighty
to suffer and save.

Steadfast and strong was the flame ; all doubts and
desires and fears

Fell into its fervour and fed it thro' wasted and
wearisome years :

In his high-built cell of Savona, alone with the sea
and the sky,

Or in exile in lands of the North, where the rains
drift drearily,

One vision still clave to his slumbers, all visions
amidst and above,

One form, even Italy's phantom, the land of his
birth and his love.

And his heart beat high with resolve, when he saw
in the darkness arise

That face so fair in her sorrow, those wistful
 memorial eyes.

Such and so piteous they seemed, so piteous and
 holy and pure,

As the eyes of the desolate queen who in Ithaca
 long must endure

Drear yearning for him who came not, and wrongs
 of a lawless race.

Year after year she endured, for Athene gave to
 her grace,

Weaving the web in her chamber, or gazing seaward
 in care

For her lord who tarried long ; yet, in fulness of
 time he was there,

Yea, he came when they looked not for him, as
 sudden noon in the night,

And the mean garb fell from his shoulders, and
 plain in his terrible might

He sprang with a shout to the daïs and dealt forth
 the arrows of doom,

And the spoilers were broken before him, their
 ghosts fled away thro' the gloom. .

II

IMMORTAL Brethren, saviour spirits fair,
Ye were not born to your dear land alone ;
Earth's golden book enrols you as her own,
And of your honour all the world is heir.
For in an age sunk deep in sordid care
Ye still had ears to list a nobler tone,
Ye called to loyal hearts, and led them on,
Loyal to love, disdainful of despair.

The earthquake and the thunder and the fire,
These in your godlike struggle clothed you o'er,
And clouds confused of lurid vapour dire.
Now in the firmament's untroubled floor
Shine your twin stars whereto our souls aspire,
Moved with the moving heaven for evermore.

ITALIA UNA

“WHAT though the branch be broken
And fit for winter flame,
Yet shows it still a token
Of the high wood whence it came.”

So sang the ancient singer¹ :
And, though men deemed her dead,
They saw a radiance linger
Around that royal head.

But lo, the leaves are springing
From that dead branch and dry,
New life thy breath is bringing,
Thou hard-won Liberty.

¹ Pindar, *Pyth.* iv.

And these memorial mountains,
And woods of grey and green,
And voice of falling fountains,
Shall hail thee for their queen :

And gates of song and story,
Made pure from shame and sin,
Roll back to greet the glory
Of thy fair feet entering in.

Like mighty waters meeting
Our voice with hers shall cry—
A great acclaim of greeting—
England to Italy :

A voice of gratulation
O'er Alp and plain and sea,
Nation to new-born nation,
The free soul to the free.

THE PAINTER'S DEATH-HOUR

It is all done ; I can no longer move
This hand, which while it lived could quicken life
Even in dead things, but now itself is dead.
Farewell best loved, most magic isle of Earth,
O suns and moons of Venice, fare ye well !

Nay, but the life is quick again within me,
My heart and all my veins are full of fire,
Such as the sunset rains upon the sea
In mine own Venice, where these eyes must close.
Ay, and in this supreme and speechless hour
A hundred hundred sounds and sights of glory,
Delicious dreams and multitudinous,
All memories ten times intensified
Even from the extreme intensity of old,

Throng on me and overthrow me and make me
mad.

They are all singing, all the wondrous voices
That sang by night in Venice to the moon :
The sound of joy august, a people's voice,
Proclaiming triumph of Venetian arms ;
The sound of sailors' carol, full and clear,
Singing the songs of Venice o'er the brine,
Children of Hadria, fierce and frank as he ;
The sound of lutes, pleading to charmed ears
Of women fair as daughters of the gods ;
And when these fail, I hear the evening wave
Before the black prow ripple soothingly,
Or heave large breasts against the marble stair,
Softer than doves' ; but softer yet the sound
Of answering heart-beats and of whispered love.

They are all glowing, all the glorious colours
That swelled my soul with rapturous emulation
To flash them back to nature, flame for flame.
I see the sunrise flush the northern hills,
Toraro to Cavallo, range on range ;
And all the pomp of man and pomp of God

82 THE PAINTER'S DEATH-HOUR

That met beneath the morning on the waves,
When the Republic royally went forth
With all her armaments and admirals,
Banners and blazons ; and the Ring was thrown,
And the City wedded to the enfolding Sea.

Lo, in this moment all that I have dreamed
And all that I have painted, these I am.
I am that youth, his hair with vine-leaves
crowned,
Who feels amid the revel a mailed hand
Set on his shoulder, and at the touch awakes
The moan of memories unescapable
That murmur in his ear, The end is come.
I am the wondrous player making music,
Into whose human and mysterious eyes
Some spirit, speaking through my hand, has
breathed
The unread open secret of a soul.
And I am there where the hot swooning day
Broods o'er the teeming stillness quiveringly,
And golden light distils from golden limbs,
Bare at the green edge of the summer bower :

THE PAINTER'S DEATH-HOUR 83

While sounds of summer pipings, hardly heard,
Stir springs of tears that rise not to the eyes.

And all that bower with me is sinking slowly
Down through the dark earth, with unchanging air,
To the dim realm Elysian, where we dream
Beneath another sun and other stars.

O other sun be thou as fair as this,
But kinder ; send me not so soon away ;
Lend me more life before the second death,
If second death there be, or second life.
A cloud creeps up : the lines, the colours reel ;
Mine eyes, that longed for light, are tired of it ;
My hand lies by me dead ; and I desire
A little space at least of gentler dreams,
Of gentle dreams a space, or gentler sleep.

FIorentina

O SURELY surely life is fair,
And surely surely hearts are true ;
Be witness, balm of April air,
And boundless depth of midnight blue.

The trouble of an hour ago,
That seemed to gather round our way,
Is vanished as the last-year snow
That hid the hills of Fesole.

And softly still the moonlight falls,
O love, and makes for thee and me
An Eden 'mid the bay-leaf walls,
The fragrant bowers of Boboli.

How gently o'er our spirits move
The golden hours we feared would die !
The very flame that threatened Love
Has lent us light to see him by.

A SINGER

A LIGHT from heaven is on her eyes ;
Behold her in the choral throng,
Transfigured to angelic guise
By potency of solemn song :
Her soul with starry radiance crowned
Floats upward on the sea of sound.

What now to her the chilling fate
That binds her life in lifelong gyves ?
The drear enclosure of her state
That without help or hope deprives
Her soul of its ambrosial food—
More lonely lot than solitude.

The painter's subtle curve and hue,
The poet's high, heart-echoed word,
These touch her, but her ear and view
Half shrink from what they saw and heard :
For while her thought to heaven flies
She feels her feet upon the ice.

But now she knows no bar divide,
For sense and spirit, life and soul
Are melted in the music's tide
To one serene ecstatic whole :
And all her being to the skies
Soars rapturous in her voice and eyes.

So leave her singing, soaring there,
Ere yet the spell have lost its power,
Thrilled through by that harmonious air,
All glorious for one golden hour ;
And dream of some diviner clime
Where ecstasy shall vanquish time.

A 'DIRGE

CALL her not, nay, for she
Silently, piteously
Called in her misery,
And none might aid,
Or aiding might not save
Aught more than if the grave
And ninefold Stygian wave
Held her sad shade.
Call her not back again,
She is gone forth from pain,
Call her not back again.

O Earth unreconciled
Thou might'st have been more mild
To this the choicest child
Of all thy race :
But this is still thy care,

With wrecks of thy most fair
To feed rank growths that bear
Foul fruits and base.
Think'st thou thine hour of doom
Shall thus less fearful loom
For this thy self-wrought gloom ?

Through night and day roll on,
O Earth, till all be gone
Whereo'er the sun hath shone
Of joy or fear,
Until no human sound
Disturb thy tear-stained ground
In frost eternal bound,
A soulless sphere.
It shall be better so
When no heart aches to know
The ancient waste and woe.

Call her not back again,
She is gone forth from pain,
Call her not back again.

A MOURNER'S DREAM

IN dreams I visited the world below,
Where waking yet, alas, I may not go.

It was that night, I knew it in my dream,
Wherein her shade should reach the Stygian stream.

On that drear bank, beneath the sombre air,
I waited shivering till her shade were there.

But envious ghosts closed round me as I stood,
Their chill hands on the fountain of my blood.

So when she came I could not speak or stir ;
I scarce had joy to look once more on her.

Shrouded and veiled she to the shore drew nigh
Where that grim bark was waiting silently.

Still veiled, she took her place within the boat ;
She bowed her sweet head down, and knew me not.

She knew me not, and the ghosts froze my breath ;
Little I won by that foretaste of death.

She took her place within the waiting bark,
And it moved forth upon that water dark.

Then once, but once, her breast heaved suddenly ;
Then knew I well, that was a sigh for me.

Ah me, but yet beyond this stream, I think,
Another water would they have thee drink.

But thou by Lethe's river, O my love,
Wilt not as yet be fain to drink thereof.

SWEET WATER AND SALT

Flow on, sweet stream, and let thy bosom calm
To the calm rising moon her mirror be ;
While moon and sky and earth are breathing balm,
Flow on, sweet stream, on to the bitter sea.

Thy breast is still, but down thy bank the wings
Of gentle airs creeping scarce visibly
Stir the quick sap in all green woodland things :
Wind, quickening stream, on to the barren sea.

But now I past where that broad pleasance lay,
Sloping to meet thee its long-shadowed lea,
While eager children frolicked in the hay :
Laugh, happy stream, on to the moaning sea.

Then next I came where gleeful boys would lave
Their plunging limbs in healthful revelry,
Fresh youth made younger by thy freshening wave :
Run, youth-loved stream, on to the ancient sea.

A boat I past that man and maiden bare
Spell-bound in trustful hope and tender glee ;
Their whispered words scarce moved the brooding
air :
Steal, gentle stream, on to the loveless sea.

And there again amid rook-haunted trees
Didst thou glide past the ivied priory,
A symbol hoar of meditative peace :
Glide on, still stream, on to the toilful sea.

These hours of setting sun and rising moon
Had power to melt my mood to moods of thee,
And all my soul to thy sweet soul attune :
Flow now, kind stream, on to the soulless sea.

WINTER WASTE

AH, would that it were summer, once more the
summer prime,
When the bloom was on the roses and the bees
were in the thyme,
In the thyme-flower on the moorland, on the roses
in the vale,
And there the lark was singing, and here the
nightingale.

O the still and ancient garden where the nightin-
gale sang strong
Till the brief sweet night was ended and the
morning hushed her song :

Then the earth put on queen's raiment, glad sounds
and lovely light,

And the wide heaven widened upward, and our
spirits climbed the height.

Then the great trees swayed their branches and
murmured each to each :

The chestnut to the cedar, and the lime-tree to
the beech ;

O the beech's purple splendour and the fragrance
of the lime,

Glad gifts from thee their giver, O golden
summer-time.

And yet with all these fair things there were fairer
things than these,

Bright-winged Hopes that hovered among the
murmuring trees ;

With beat of magic plumage their flying fanned
the air,

And their song divine was singing what our hearts
imagined there.

But now the trees moan leafless, the bleak day's
pallid eye

Gropes on in stealth ignoble o'er his little space
of sky,

The east wind whines and whistles, the air is
chill and wan,

And all the fragrance scattered, and all the glory
gone.

AROUSAL

HOLD us not here ; the flowers have ceased to blow,
The frost begun :
Hold us not here ; we will arise and go,
The dream is done.

Our feet are set upon a sterner way,
And we must on ;
Ease, thou hast dwelt with us a summer day,
But now begone.

Still deem we vain the strifes whose countering cries
Clash from afar,
Yet through their midst we seek one purer prize,
One beckoning star.

A MARCH DAY

THIS day of sleet and evil cheer
How different dawned that roving year,
Revealing through the half-lit haze
The blue divine Ionian bays.
How bright beneath Phæacian trees
Anemone and iris glowed,
The olives scattering in the breeze
Dark fruit upon the flowery road.

Ionian earth, Ionian sea
Are vanished from me utterly ;
The dull roofs drip, almost it seems
That sea and earth were fading dreams.
So long the wide and deathlike wings
Of winter have possessed the land,
Almost our souls those radiant things
Remember not nor understand.

What then? The Northman's lot be ours!
Yield we the South her year-long flowers,
Her lizard on the glowing stone,
Her glittering sea's mild monotone.
Though her rich scenes we gladly range
And nurse their memory never pale,
For all her charm we would not change
Our Ocean-mist, our Ocean-gale.

Nay, yet wait on, the tardy smile
Of Nature to our wintry isle
Shall reach, and make us kin once more
To that rejoicing southern shore.
We too shall feel some morn in May
As felt Alcæus hearkening,
When in the Lesbian dales he lay
And heard the footstep of the spring.

MIDSUMMER TWILIGHT

Now doth the Year forget his far-off birth
And his wan winter cradle, bare and cold ;
He enters on his heritage of Earth,
And crowns his brow with the strong sunbeam's
gold.

All the long day in the blue deep of sky
The silvery floating cloudlets glide and climb ;
The roses burn and breathe, and rich July
Unlocks the hoarded sweetness of the lime.

The pulse of life is beating full and fast,
The hum of wings murmurs through tree and
flower :

Yet that hot life is hushed asleep at last ;
And with the hush comes on a holier hour

Then broods the grey dove, Twilight, grave and
fair ;

The fitful wind has lightly fled away :
Only dumb settings of the tide of air
Breathe a faint fragrance from the fields of hay.

Voices of children homing cheerily
With softened gladness tinkle from afar.
They fade, they cease : lo, in the silent sky,
Silent and lone, the sister planet star.

Then breathes the spell, melodious, magical ;
Voices long lost, and voices yet to be,
Half on the sense, half on the spirit fall,
Like shells that murmur of the murmuring sea.

PROBATION

I

Now, as when sometime with high festival
A conquering king new realms inaugurates,
The souls of men go up within the gates
Of their new-made mysterious palace-hall.
And on their ears in bursts of triumph fall
Marches of mighty music, while below,
In carven cups with far-sought gems aglow,
And lamped by shapes of splendour on the wall,
The new wine of Man's kingdom flashes free.
Yet some among the wonders wondering there
Sit desolate, and shivering inwardly
Lack yet some love to make the strange thing fair ;
Yea, to their sad souls rather seem to be
Sheep from the sheepfold strayed they know not
where.

II

WITHAL a still voice in an under-strain
Low in Man's heart half audible there seems :
" Visions of visions," saith it, " dreams of dreams,
What doth thy soul with these, O over-fain
To have done with doubt, to rest, and to see plain?
Yet not without a plea thy yearning eyes :
How last a gift is patience to the wise !
But thou art born for more than longing pain.
Look forth and know thine order among men :
Nor sire nor son but even thyself art thou ;
The land for them ; thy home is on the sea.
Yet shall the wild waves cast thee now and then
Some pearl-like word to bind about thy brow :
This first : where Love is, must Faith also be."

THE MASTER-ART

THE old-world builder reared his mount of stone
With soaring arch and vaulted vastness blent,
A firmament within the firmament.

The melodist, inweaving tone with tone,
Breathes through the organ's peal his music blown
And through the choir, till the high roof be rent,
And o'er the stars without impediment
Dawn some dim vision of the sovran Throne.

Thence we go forth, haply to watch forlorn
Through some drear night, where no pure anthems
roll.

Then come, O mightiest master of them all,
Poet, at whose divine deep-breathing call
Night melts to golden glow, and homeward borne
We rest in the Eternal, soul in soul.

DARWIN

UNRESTING and unhasting Labourer,
Thy faithful toil and eye intuitive,
And all the gifts a lavish life can give,
Have crowned thee Nature's chosen Interpreter.
The attributes august we feign in her
Are verily of thy being, and shall live
Linked with thy name, what chance soe'er arrive,
A memory and a music rich and clear.
Therefore henceforth thy spirit evermore
Shall seem inhabitant of each thought and thing
It pondered ; whether where the murmuring bee
Buries his bright plumes in the flowery store,
Or where within the coral's rampart ring
Sleep the still pools amid the clamorous sea.

JAMES SPEDDING

(Expositor and defender of Francis Bacon.)

FAREWELL long-musing spirit, mild and wise,
That wert like some still tarn among the hills
Of thy fair home ancestral, fed by rills
That stir unseen its deep translucencies.
Beneath the patient gaze of those calm eyes
The inveterate crust of errors and of ills
That clings around the past, and clinging kills,
Fell off, and earth through thee had fewer lies.
To serve one honoured Shade thy life was planned,
Riches past by, the noise of fame unheard ;
For this not over-rashly may we dare
To rank thee with the royal-hearted band
Upon whose brows is writ the undying word :
*Not hate but love this soul was born to share.*¹

1881.

¹ οἷτοι συνέχθειν ἀλλὰ συμφιλεῖν ἔφυν.—*Antigone*.

“THE SEA-MAIDS’ MUSIC”

ONE moment the boy, as he wandered by night
Where the far-spreading foam in the moonbeam
was white,

One moment he caught on the breath of the
breeze

The voice of the sisters that roam thro’ the seas.

One moment, no more : though the boy lingered
long,

No more might he hear of the mermaidens’ song,
But the pine-woods behind him moaned low from
the land,

And the ripple gushed soft at his feet on the
sand.

108 "THE SEA-MAIDS' MUSIC"

Yet or ever they ceased, the strange sound of their
joy

Had lighted a light in the breast of the boy ;

And the seeds of a wonder, a splendour to be,

Had been breathed through his soul from the songs
of the sea.

LOVE'S COMMON KINGDOM

LOVE'S COMMON KINGDOM

I

THE ROBE OF LIGHT

THE gates are open day by day,
The realm within is nobly fair,
Yet some there be who turn away
Or count it loss to linger there.

A heart and fancy warm and pure—
These feed the light Love's lieges wear :
While these in faithful force endure
That light shall gleam through gathering care.

Though Sorrow's brand the heart-strings rive,
And Death o'ercloud with sundering doom,
That ray divine shall yet survive,
A holy lamp behind the gloom.

II

LIFE WITHIN LIFE

THE shepherd lover of old Sicily,
Pouring melodious plaint in doubt's despite
Before the cave that hid his love from sight,
Would fain have been the tawny mountain-bee,
That on like honey-seeking wing might he
Flit in beneath the hanging ivy bright
And tremulous fern, and fly to his Delight,
Even her for whom his heart longed lovingly.
Mine is that bliss and more, for while I roam
Through the strange world, my heart one image
bears

Of one pure bower, one chosen sanctuary,
Where Love and Truth and Beauty make their
home,
Secret and sure, and make my home with theirs,
Builded for these and me immovably.

III

THE YEAR'S SEAL

TRUE heart, this day a year ago our lives for ever
blended,

We knelt beneath the ancient rite, we vowed the
ancient vow :

Now joyful hope is merged in joy, and dream by
deed transcended,

The spring that welled so brightly then, runs a
bright river now.

That day, from inmost heaven sent, a Spirit stood
before us,

His wings were lit with rainbow light, and on his
brow a star :

A wand with dews of Eden wet he bare, and
waved it o'er us,

At his mute summons forth we went, and followed
him afar.

114 LOVE'S COMMON KINGDOM

Through wondrous ways, by earthly guides un-
trodden, undiscovered,

He led us on, in trust and joy still following hand
in hand :

A thousand happy mated birds amid the woodland
hovered,

The very earth with gladness heaved, and gleamed
with golden sand.

Sometimes within those fairy glades, those dreamy
deep recesses,

Almost thy gentle heart had failed, so strangely
fair they seemed,

But evermore new faith grew up to meet new-
found caresses,

And still within the magic shade the star of
guidance gleamed.

It paused amid the pine-forest ; we watched in awe
and wonder ;

The birds were hushed ; a silence fell ; we listened
long and long :

Then softly through that holy place, around, above,
and under,
Came murmuring on a solemn sound, the pine-
wood's mystic song.

We left the glen, we sought the sun ; but that
high hour had brought us
A charm through changing life to live, an under-
song sublime :
For Love our lord, our spirit-guide, his master-
spell had taught us,
The spell he knows and he alone, the spell that
combats Time.

IV

INFANT TOUCH

O BLITHEST thing and sweetest
Of all the blithe and sweet,
From some far clime thou greetest
Our parent eyes that greet.

Over what unknown water
What fairy bark hath sped
To waft this new-won daughter,
This glad and golden head ?

By clashing rocks unfrighted
That guard the gates of birth,
Thou hast drifted on, and lighted
On the fair, sad fields of earth.

A tiny hand comes gliding,
I feel it touch and twine ;
With what entire confiding
It meets and masters mine !

Ah ! little hand but lead us
Back to thy magic boat ;
Nor foe nor friend shall heed us,
As far away we float.

Lead on, and we will follow
 And seek the sinless isle,
 Where in some hidden hollow
 Thy blue eyes learnt their smile.

We'll loose the silken tether
 And spread the filmy sail,
 We three will fleet together
 To find that fairy vale.

V

INFANT EYES

BLOOD of my blood, bone of my bone,
 Heart of my being's heart,
 Strange visitant, yet very son ;
 All this, and more, thou art.

In thy soft lineaments I trace,
 More winning daily grown,
 The sweetness of thy mother's face
 Transfiguring my own.

That grave but all untroubled gaze,
So rapt yet never dim,
Seems following o'er their starry ways
The wings of cherubim.

Two worlds man hardly may descry,
(For manhood clouds them o'er),
Commingled to mine inward eye
Are shadowed forth once more :

That lost world, whither man's regret
With fictive fancy turns ;
That world to come, where brighter yet
The star of promise burns.

Time and his weary offspring Care
Fade in that gaze away ;
One moment mystically fair
Lives on, one timeless day.

VI

THE RIVER OF LOVE

Lo, the River from the blue hills welling,
Stream of Love that ever ampler rolls,
Fed by fount on fount to wider swelling,
Bears the sacred bark of plighted souls.

Close embraced in bonds no shock can sunder
Fare they, well content whate'er befall :
Let the changeful skies or smile or thunder :
Storm and sunshine—they have heart for all.

Somewhere, well they know, in ambush lying
Right athwart their River, near or far,
Gorged with hopes engulfed, their hope defying,
Death, the sandbank, rears his gloomy bar.

Then shall that brave River, swiftlier sweeping,
Burst the bar and o'er it bear them free,
Out and onward to the Ocean leaping,
Out and on to Love's eternal Sea.

MILTON

HE left the upland lawns and serene air
Wherefrom his soul her noble nurture drew,
And reared his helm among the unquiet crew
Battling beneath ; the morning radiance rare
Of his young brow amid the tumult there
Grew grim with sulphurous dust and sanguine dew :
Yet through all soilure they who marked him knew
The sign of his life's dayspring, calm and fair.
But when peace came, peace fouler far than war,
And mirth more dissonant than battle's tone,
He, with a scornful sigh of that clear soul,
Back to his mountain clomb, now bleak and frore,
And with the awful Night he dwelt alone,
In darkness, listening to the thunder's roll.

A SONG OF THE THAMES

FORTH from the wolds where the West winds are
 blowing,
Stealing unheeded by coppice and lea,
Winds the young Thames, of his errand un-
 knowing,
Wanders and wonders with infantine glee.
Hail to the River, brave little River,
Light-hearted runner that starts for the Sea.

Then, where the swimmer-limbs plunge in the
 noontide,
Then, where the racing oars flash as they flee :
Friend of our youth, in the joy of the Junetide
Oxford and Eton are lovers of thee.
Hail to the River, life-giving River,
Loving to linger, but bound for the Sea.

Many his islets, but one on our loyalty
Calls like a trumpet while Britain shall be ;
Many his islets, but Runnymede's royalty
Stands ever crowned in the hearts of the free.
Hail to the River, famous old River,
Runnymede's River, roll proud to the Sea !

Then for his close—what were Tiber beside him,
Danube or Neva, the Seine or the Spree ?
Heaving the fleets of the world that o'erride him,
Broad and august as a nation's decree.
Hail to the River, regal old River,
River of England, sweep on to the Sea !

GORDON

ON through the Libyan sand
Rolls ever, mile on mile,
League on long league, cleaving the rainless land,
Fed by no friendly wave, the immemorial Nile.

Down through the cloudless air,
Undimmed, from heaven's sheer height,
Bend their inscrutable gaze, austere and bare,
In long-proceeding pomp, the stars of Libyan night.

Beneath the stars, beside the unpausing flood,
Earth trembles at the wandering lion's roar ;
Trembles again, when in blind thirst of blood
Sweep the wild tribes along the startled shore.

They sweep and surge and struggle, and are gone :
The mournful desert silence reigns again,
The immemorial River rolleth on,
The ordered stars gaze blank upon the plain.

O awful Presence of the lonely Nile,
O awful Presence of the starry sky,
Lo, in this little while
Unto the mind's true-seeing inward eye
There hath arisen there
Another haunting Presence as sublime,
As great, as sternly fair ;
Yea, rather fairer far
Than stream, or sky, or star,
To live while star shall burn or river roll,
Unmarred by marring Time,
The crown of Being, a heroic soul.

Beyond the weltering tides of worldly change
He saw the invisible things,
The eternal Forms of Beauty and of Right ;

Wherewith well pleased his spirit wont to range,
Rapt with divine delight,
Richer than empires, royaler than kings.

Lover of children, lord of fiery fight,
Saviour of empires, servant of the poor,
Not in the sordid scales of earth, unsure,
Depraved, adulterate,
He measured small and great,
But by some righteous balance wrought in heaven,
To his pure hand by Powers empyreal given ;
Therewith, by men unmoved, as God he judged
aright.

As on the broad sweet-watered river tost
Falls some poor grain of salt,
And melts to naught, nor leaves embittering trace ;
As in the o'er-arching vault
With unrepelled assault
A cloudy climbing vapour, lightly lost,
Vanisheth utterly in the starry space ;

So from our thought, when his enthroned estate
We inly contemplate,
All wrangling phantoms fade, and leave us face to
face.

Dwell in us, sacred spirit, as in thee
Dwelt the eternal Love, the eternal Life,
Nor dwelt in only thee ; not thee alone
We honour reverently,
But in thee all who in some succouring strife,
By day or dark, world-witnessed or unknown,
Crushed by the crowd, or in late harvest hailed,
Warring thy war have triumphed, or have failed.

Nay, but not only there
Broods thy great Presence, o'er the Libyan plain.
It haunts a kindlier clime, a dearer air,
The liberal air of England, thy loved home.
Thou through her sunlit clouds and flying rain
Breathe, and all winds that sweep her island shore—
Rough fields of riven foam,
Where in stern watch her guardian breakers roar.

Ay, throned with all her mighty memories,
Wherefrom her nobler sons their nurture draw,
With all of good or great
For aye incorporate
That rears her race to faith and generous shame,
To high-aspiring awe,
To hate implacable of thick-thronging lies,
To scorn of gold and gauds and clamorous fame—
With all we guard most dear and most divine,
All records ranked with thine,
Here be thy home, brave soul, thy undecaying
shrine.

1885.

TO BRITAIN HALF-ARMED

O FAIR and queenly Mother,
A wondrous road is thine ;
It leads by vale and mountain-crown,
It leads through shade and shine.

Dark dale and sunlit mountain
Thou hast crossed as fate might call ;
Yet still must meet thy venturous feet
A gloomier gorge than all.

Mark well the envious spectres
That scowl across the sea !
They hate thy rugged rampart,
Thy fortress of the free.

Here in thy hallowed precinct,
Here in thine own fair isles
Blind guides with bootless labour
Strain at their wordy wiles.

Thou wert not wont to worship
The prater's wordy charm,
Thy fire was in thy valiant heart,
Thy voice was in thine arm.

O fair immortal Mother,
Queen of the world-wide Sea,
Dear to thy loyal children,
Let them be dear to thee.

Thou hast them still around thee,
Thou hast them, rich and poor,
With knees to idols yet unbent,
With hearts yet strong and sure.

130 TO BRITAIN HALF-ARMED

Still in thy true son's bosom
Hid deep, a holy thing,
Stands writ that name of Britain
Which makes him more than king.

These, if thou rightly seek them,
Shall help thee dare and do,
Tear out the creeping canker,
Thrust forth the faithless crew.

Is it false trust that drugs thee,
Or but dull greed of gold,
That forgets thy roll of honour
And the hard-fought fields of old ?

Yet gaze not only backward
To brood on ancient fame ;
Keep sharp thy sword for watch and ward,
Keep pure the deathless flame.

By the age-long stream of story
That murmurs deep and far,
From the bows and bills of Ethandune
To the guns of Trafalgar ;

By the cheer that rang to Havelock
From Lucknow's Tophet town,
By the blood of brave men wasted,
And by Gordon's martyr crown,

Arise ! put on thine armour !
Face full the stormy sky !
Make fast thy tower upon the rock,
And bid the old flag fly !

The gathering foes are round thee,
Their spring is near, and then—
Then God strike home for Britain !
Strike home, God's British men !

A FAREWELL

JANUARY 1901

FARE ye well for ever, ye three-and-sixty years,
Born in anxious boding, closed with kindly tears.

Fare ye well for ever, but not with you shall fade
The seed ye sowed of blessing, the foundations ye
have laid.

Our seedlings grow to forest ; tier by tier our
walls
Lift up in tower and turret our temples and our
halls.

There throng the wondering peoples, and tell what
things have been

In the days of calm or combat, when Britons served
a Queen :

When the ancient crown of Alfred, cleared from
fouling stain,

Beamed on the Mother's forehead, bright and
brave again.

So hail we high for ever those sixty years and
three

When a Queen's heart loved her peoples, in the
Empire of the Free.

ALFRED OF ENGLAND

KING beloved, a thousand years have found thee
Sovran still in hearts of English birth ;
King revered, a thousand years have crowned thee
Type eternal of true English worth.

Long the toil and dire the load thou borest,
Rising, falling, rising yet again :
Ours thy battle when the strife was sorest,
Ours the fruit of all thy faithful pain.

Thine the gloom, when the war-wave insurgent
Roared in ruin round thy sheltering fen :
Thine the glory, when thy helm emergent
Led at Ethandune thy Wessex men.

Thine the rede that in the ringing haven
Laid the warship's keel and armed her side,
Thine the sword that smote the robber Raven,
Drave him seaward with the reflux tide.

High the hope of those thy fleets of freemen,
Higher yet, had but their hope foreseen
Mightier fleets to be, and England's seamen
Borne victorious o'er their blue demesne.

Age from age took up the old sea-story,
Hand to hand has borne the torch aflame,
Drake to Blake, and Hawke's to Rodney's glory,
Howe and Hood to Nelson's hero name.

Great thy grandsire, to his folk transmitting
Faithful trust in one broad Realm to be :
Great thy son, and thy son's seed befitting
Blood derived from Egbert and from thee.

But thy faith, the Isle's due lot discerning,
Saw her raised above the rugged strife,
Labouring still toward the light, and learning
Milder spells to mould her mighty life.

Force with force but boon with boon requiting,
Large the welcome of her liberal shore,
Race to race and mind to mind uniting,
Northern valiance linked with Southern lore.

High above the crowd of kings thou risest,
Fraud nor fury stained thy steadfast soul ;
Warrior scholar, watchfulest and wisest,
With the sword thou barest still the scroll.

Round the world, let day arise or darken,
Moves in might thy Folk that shall not fail :
Soul of Alfred ! to thy children hearken ;
Round the world their voices bid thee hail !

TO THE ARMY IN AFRICA

STRONG-HEARTED host, a two-fold majesty
Crowns your long toil ; not only the old scorn
Of wounds and death, light reck to Britons born,
But brighter yet and more immortally
Shines your unstained, self-hindering chivalry—
Fame that shall wear through fames of fight out-
worn—

Shield of the foe's own weakling folk forlorn
Left by his flying war to drift and die.

Press on, brave bands, till your high goal be won.
The alien envy yelps far off in vain,
Fed with the lies it lusts for. Let it rave.
Behind your sword that smiteth but to save
Follow fair Peace, and Law's long-hoped-for reign.
So, conquering and to conquer, labour on.

1902.

PACISQUE IMPONERE MOREM

THE flame of battle burns no more
For warrior Briton, warrior Boer ;
No more their answering thunder fills
The hollows of the fortress hills ;
No more the murderous marksmen hide
Entrenched along the mountain-side ;
No more our lines with gathering speed
Press onward to their desperate deed,
And, fired beyond all human fear,
Storm the fell rampart with a cheer.

Sons of the North, one toil is done ;
Now be a bloodless task begun !
Of that redoubled work of Rome
The weightier half is yet to come :

“The proud are crushed, the vanquisht spared,”
Now be the paths of peace prepared !

Behold, the long-distracted land
Lies in the hollow of our hand,
And where the opposing flags have flown
One flag must fly, and one alone.
Even now the foe has felt the light
Pierce his dim cave of truthless night,
And owns with half-amazed relief
The chivalry of an English chief.
Slowly his clouded brow shall clear,
Lightened of all but wholesome fear,
Till Time have purged his better part
From falsities that flecked his heart,
To earn a freedom full as true
As any that ere now he knew.

Britain, thy task to frame the State !
No new achievement for thy fate—
(So witness by St. Lawrence flood
Wolfe and Montcalm in brotherhood,

While o'er the Indian sea shall speak
The wild Pathán, the warrior Sikh)—
Thy task to heal the scars of strife
By lessons from an Empire's life,
To blend the strains of rival blood,
To build the road, to bridge the flood,
To sow amid the scattered garths
Light from our veterans' loyal hearths,
To lead the land in willing awe
To learn and love a juster law,
To know with gradual new delight
The restful rule of equal right,
And 'neath thy large and liberal sway
Work out her own redemption day.
Then shall the ghosts of greed and lies
Fly hellward from that fair sunrise,
And the swart storm-cloud palely cease,
Lost in the broad Britannic Peace.

THE VETERANS AT THE DELHI DURBAR

JANUARY 1, 1903

By Delhi's wall rode forth to-day
The chiefs of England and of Ind,
Proud homage to their lord to pay
Enthroned beyond the western wind.

Long time the wondering East shall tell
How rich the stream of splendour rolled,
The cannon's roar, the trumpet-swell,
The giant beasts, the gems and gold ;

The warrior lines of sun-lit steel,
The herald's pomp, the flag unfurled,
The chaunted hymn whose solemn peal
Is rolled in glory round the world.

Yet over all that dazzling day,
Through all the gorgeous glories there,
One moment breaks with mightier ray,
O'er that fair pomp supremely fair.

Why rise they up, that lordly throng,
With reverent hail and eager cheer ?
No glittering squadrons young and strong,
No gold, no jewelled robes are here.

Old men and worn, with many a scar
From many a combat nobly won,
Brave remnant of the fiercest war
That ever flared to Indian sun.

Ranged by the Briton veteran's side
They too, the loyal of the land,
Through that stern struggle true and tried,
They too are here, a brother band.

Lo, there the Ridge, the key of fate,
Whence sprang the Lion, wounded sore ;
Lo, there in wreck the towered Gate
Rent by our heroes' deed of yore.

Hail to all hands that bore on high
Our deathless flag through fields of flame !
The hands that strove grow old and die ;
The soul of Britain lives the same.

THE DAYS OF OLD

Who is he that allureth our eyes to what years
unborn may unfold ?

Who is he that turneth us backward to dream of
the days of old ?

Even he who is and is not, who is not and cannot
be

Yet binds our souls in his bondage, yet drowns us
deep in his sea :

Even he that abideth and fleeteth, that ends not
nor ever began,

Even Time the immutable billow, the mocker of
Nature and Man.

Feel ! it is Time's hand moving ; he moves us, he
bids us behold

The strange sweet things that he lent us, long since
in the days of old.

Who are these that arise in the twilight, that joy-
fully wend on their way

Thro' the breath of the new-mown meadow, the
billowy heaps of the hay ?

Ourselves are there, and beside us the forms of the
dead ones dear,

And the dim air quickens and murmurs, and voices
breathe on the ear.

They are risen, the spoil of the Slayer, that seemed
to have fled away

To a sleep that wins no waking, a night that
knoweth not day.

And we feel more vivid the presence, and all on
the ancient wise ;

And the old smile quivers and gleams, and we feed
on the faithful eyes.

Then we stretch forth hands to the vision, and call
with a voiceless cry

That it leave us not yet for a little, but come to
us closer anigh.

But behold, as we call it is vanished, and leaves our
longing behind,

Vanished away like a vapour, away on the wings
of the wind.

One Self we deem it that follows wherever the
years may lead :

But the Self of selves, what is it, and who is the
Man indeed ?

Is it Age with his slow gait guarded, his sorrowful
vision of sooth,

Or Youth with the wings of the Morning, en-
chanted, ineffable Youth ?

Does there live in the flight of our longings a love
that is ever the same ?

Does there burn thro' the flame-tongues changing
a changeless heart of the flame ?

Long are the shadows of even, and long are the
shadows of morn :

Are the days of old but fallen to rise in the days
unborn ?

PERVIGILIUM ANIMAE

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet.

IN the watch before the daybreak over land and
over sea

Broods the brooding Night more nearly in her sad
solemnity.

Then the star-fires, ere they vanish in the day's
deluding light,

Urgent with redoubled ardour burn from their
embattled height.

In that hour they drew me toward them, through
the void they drew me high,

Not so far that in the vastness seemed their haughty
host more nigh,

But to where their silent bidding, as the vision
broader grew,

Bade me mark Man's little kingdom circling in my
magic view.

Half in sun and half in shadow restless ran the
spinning sphere,

Far beyond her track the sunlight died into the
darkness drear.

Then my soul was pierced with pity, all as
though there met my sight

Some poor sheep unheeded straying, straying
blindly through the night.

"Mother," cried my pitying spirit, fondly as
though Earth could hear,

"Mother own or foster Mother, still to Man a
mother dear,

Ever speeding, ever circling, shuttle in the cosmic
loom,

Round to spring and round to winter, here in glory,
here in gloom,

Lo, thy haggard Moon that haunts thee, thy forlorn
remembrancer,

Watching till the fate shall find thee that must
leave thee like to her.

Age by age thy force must fail thee, fading with
thy fading sun,

All thy living gifts and glories pine and perish one
by one :

All the sounds of happy summer on the fragrant
breezes borne,

All the fiery pomp of even, all the floating mists
of morn :

All the wondrous forms of Water, calm or forceful,
pent or free,

All the charm and all the terror of the myriad-
mooded Sea :

Mossy rills amid the mountains, children of the
brooding snow,

All the torrent's flashing fury, all the regal river's
flow :

Human hope and human labour, noble love and
noble hate,

All the strife and all the valour, hero hearts that
feared not fate :

All the magic love of lovers glorifying earth and
sea,

Love of mothers, love of fathers, deepest loves of
all that be.

Vowed to Death we file before him, hail him Victor,
hail him King,

King within the narrow kingdom caging here our
captive wing.

Be it so ; we bow before him, yet forbear not
from the fight,

Yet must Man take up the challenge of the all-
enfolding Night.

These must die, but in their dying dies not all
they meant for Man,

Dies not all they woke within him far beyond their
bounded span ;

All that Man has blindly reached for, stretching
hands of hope forlorn,

Dragging down the hope he clung to, yet for
moments high upborne,

Things of sense and soul confounding, small with
great and foul with fair,

Hiding God in human semblance—yet a gleam of
God was there—

Seeking still to find fulfilment of an unfulfilled
design,

Frail and fainting, yet thro' darkness feeling after
forms divine :

Till the Spirit, rising fearless far beyond thy foster-
ing shade,

Claim the freedom, claim the fulness, claim the
kingdom long delayed ;

Not as now I hence behold thee, by the mocking
spell up-buoyed,

Seeing thy low fate more lowly, drearier yet the
dreary void ;

No, but with another rising higher than all height
by far,

When all high and low have vanished, lowly earth
and lofty star ;

When the fires have lost their fervour and the
deeps their deadly chill,

All the force of moving matter merged in forces
mightier still.

Then let him that shrank from loving, fearing lest
his love should fall,

Love, and him that loved aforetime love with
higher hope thro' all.

Stand we here, O foster Mother, here in dim
expectancy,

Stand we here in stern endeavour, watch and work
and wait with thee."

Thus I spake, but Earth beneath me said me
neither yea nor nay,

Neither nay nor yea she answered, speeding on
her soundless way.

Then the dream was fallen from me, and the starry
spell withdrawn ;

And I woke, with Earth around me wakened to
the widening dawn.

THE TOILS OF TIME

“FROM Night to Night for one brief visible span
The fluttering bird fleets through the lamp-lit hall :
Like that poor bird the fluttering life of man ;
From Night it sprang, and Night must o’er it fall.”

So to the ancient King his Wisest spake,
As once an old faith waned, a new waxed bright :
But what cheer now or King or People make
None knoweth ; they are gone into the Night.

Lo, the great flaming suns that onward sweep,
Each with his brood warmed by his fiery wings,
For ever onward through the icy deep,
Potent for life or death, creative Kings.

For ever?—Nay, these also must abate,
Age after age, the fires within them stored ;
The sister Pleiads seek their vanished mate,
And brave Orion break his golden sword.

Each orb that, o'er his cycles blindly led,
Eternal-seeming source of life and light,
Hath on through space illimitable sped,
Like man, like bird, flies but from Night to Night.

All to their doom drive on unmurmuring ;
One voice remonstrant lifts a lonely cry :
The trampling surge sweeps o'er one tameless
 thing—
Man's rebel Soul that will not learn to die.

“Behind all change,” he saith, “of gloom and glow,
That hurrying rush, those gleams that flash and fly,
One Light abides wherefrom those glimmerings
 flow :
God is that Light, and of that Light am I.”

So cries the Soul, but crying feels again
A seal of darkness quench that sense sublime,
Swept on once more by stress of fettering
chain :—

Time is the fetter, and the seal is Time.

Not yet, O Soul, may cease the rushing race,
Not yet thy baffled yearning find its crown :
Time, the false shadow, and Time's shadow, Place,
The Powers that are and are not, drag thee down.

Let Then and Now their wildering shows give o'er,
Let Thence and Thither flee with fleeing Night ;
So stand, made one with God for evermore
In one pure flame of timeless Being's Light.

DEUS EVOCAT

THE fire hath leaped upon the ancient wood,
The place thereof forgetteth where it stood.

Yet is no atom lost beneath the sky :
If dust be deathless, can the Spirit die ?

Fade floating forms, so the inmost Being stand :
Behind the forms may move a Former's hand.

Sounds there not sometime unto souls that roam
A summoning voice divine, to call them home ?

Hath not all Godward hope this goal confest,
All wills to one will drawn, and there at rest ?

This were not death, but end of wandering strife,
Merged in the Main, lost in the Life of Life.

NIGHT

NIGHT with thy mantle of gloom
Falling in fold upon fold,
Thou layest the Earth in a tomb
Of darkness and silence and cold :
Night with thy mantle of gloom.

Night with thy semblance of Death,
It was thus before life had begun,
When no lips earthly had breath,
And no leaf looked to the sun :
Night, thou art semblance of Death.

Night with thy breathing of balm
Wafted on wings of the dew,
Thou art giver of rest and of calm
And of worn life quickened anew :
Night with thy dew and thy balm.

Night with thy stillness profound,
Thou holdest our voice and our thought
To hearken a holier sound
Than the stir of the noontide brought :
Night with thy stillness profound.

Night with thy star-thronged sky,
Hidden no more by the day,
Thou drawest the spirit on high,
Winging his infinite way :
Night of the star-thronged sky.

THE END

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Author Myers, Ernest

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